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SAVAGE AFRICA.*

SOME three years ago, when that amiable traveller, M. Du Chaillu, was astonishing the London public with his wonderful adventures amongst the gorillas and the Fans of Equatorial Africa, a "young man about town" formed the Englishman-like resolution of visiting these scenes, and endeavour to reconcile the somewhat conflicting statements given by the "gorilla hunter." Before us, we have a goodly volume of some 587 pages as the result of this resolution. We, however, search in vain for any explanation of M. Du Chaillu's contradictions, as the subject is never once mentioned in the body of the work. In a note, however, we are told that the author is able to explain all M. Du Chaillu's contradictions, if he ever should be called on to do so. So far we find no fault, and we are glad that Mr. Reade has said nothing to wound the feelings of that brave traveller and explorer who was made by his injudicious friends, for their own glory, the lion of the season for 1861.

It is necessary to bear in mind Mr. Reade's object in visiting Africa. The fact is that his mission was to discover the truth; and, therefore, his testimony on any subject would consequently probably be of some considerable value. And here we think the author has made a name for himself, as one who has fearlessly spoken the truth respecting what he saw and heard. Nor is the work merely a *reprint* of the journal of a self-sufficient traveller: but Mr. Reade has exhibited no little literary skill in the composition of the volume before us.

We think, however, that the book would be greatly improved by the reduction of the number of chapters, and also of the sections of his subject. The work is divided into no less than thirty-eight chapters; at least one half too many. The author shows himself acquainted with what has been written upon the subject, and, indeed, occasionally we could wish he had not been so well acquainted with it; for we seem to recognise in more than one place anecdotes of former travellers. These, no doubt, add to the interest of the work; but they destroy the value of the volume as a book of original observation.

* *Savage Africa*: being the Narrative of a Tour in Equatorial, South-Western, and North-Western Africa; with notes on the Habits of the Gorilla; on the Existence of Unicorns and Tailed Men; on the Slave Trade; on the Origin, Character, and Capabilities of the Negro, and on the Future Civilisation of Western Africa. By W. Winwood Reade, F.A.S.L., etc. With Illustrations and a Map. Second Edition. London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1864.

It is quite out of our power to give an analysis of the contents of this work, and we must refer our readers to its pages for many interesting descriptions of African life.

The following extract describes Sierra Leone civilisation :—

“The Negro imitates the white man as the ape imitates the Negro. The result in both cases is a caricature. The rich Negro of Sierra Leone is dressed as if he had taken a bath in a rainbow; and his manners are so strained and pompous that a close imitation of them, even in the broadest farce, would be looked upon as a rough over-acting of character. But, most comical of all, is the manner in which negroes identify themselves with the parent country. To hear them talk, you would think that their ancestors had come over with William the Conqueror; and that they even take to themselves all the glories of our history, the following anecdote will prove. The French consular agent having some time ago overstepped the limits of the land, a warrant was taken out against him. Holding the sable powers in great contempt, he armed himself with a pair of pistols, and defied them with the air of a brigand at the Victoria. ‘Ah!’ cried the two constables rapidly retreating, ‘we no care for you, one dam Frenchman. I tink you forget *we win Waterloo*—eh?’

“It is one of the chief peculiarities of the Sierra Leone Negro that he hates, with an intense and bitter hatred, this white man to whom he owes everything. This Christian feeling is propagated even by the native preachers, for one is said to have explained our origin from the pulpit in the following manner: ‘My breddren, you see white man bad too much, ugly too much, no good. You want sabby how man like dat come to lib in the world. Well, I tell you. Adam and Eve, dey coloured people, very hansum; lib in one beautiful garden. Dere dey hab all things dat be good. Plantains, yams, sweet potatoes, foo-foo *palm-wine*—he-igh, too much! Den dey hab two childrum, Cain and Abel. Cain no like Abel’s palaver; one day he kill’m. Den God angry, and he say—*Cain!* Cain go hide himself; he tink him berry claber. Heigh-heigh! God say again—Cain, you tink I no see you, you bush-nigger—eh? Den Cain come out, and he say, ‘Yes, massa, I lib here—what de matter, massa?’ Den God say in one big voice like de tunder in de sky, ‘Where’m broder Abel?’ Den Cain turn white all ober with fear—dat de first white man, breddren.”

This theory of the origin of the white and black man is about on a par with the teaching of Captain Speke to the benighted king of Uganda. When educated Englishmen can talk such nonsense, we must not be too severe on the African.

The most unsatisfactory chapter in the book is that on “Liberia; its future and its resources:” a subject which is dismissed in less than three pages. We much regret this, as at this time a true description of Liberia from the pen of an unbiassed traveller would be of especial value. Mr. Reade says :—



THE GORILLA DANCE.

"In spite of all drawbacks, the indolence of many emigrants, and the itch for preaching which seems to torment Ethiopic humanity, as it does most low orders of men, one must allow that the progressive effort is a creditable one. We must not expect wonders, and we must reject the poetical balderdash sometimes served up in this Land of the Free, where so many are only free to starve. But the fact is, that any country, even fever-stricken Liberia, is better for the free man of colour than America."

Chapter XVIII contains an admirable description of the gorilla dance, together with an apparently truthfully executed drawing of the same, which has so many points of interest to the anthropologist that we are glad to be able to insert it.

Chapter XXI contains an admirable account of the "Equatorial Savage," from which we make the following extract:—

"These children are absurdly precocious. Africa is a great hot-house, in which they are forced by the sun, and in which they perish prematurely. They can always talk when they are twelve months old. At four or five years I have seen them listening with twinkling eyes to the immoral songs of their seniors, and at eight or nine, nature permits them to put in practice those theories, which, incredible as it may seem, they have actually studied beforehand.

"So much for savage chastity; and I fear that I can say as little for parental affection. The father wishes to have a child, partly because nature has planted within his breast an instinct for reproduction, second only in power to that of self-preservation; and partly because that child, if a son, will help him to hunt or fish, or paddle his canoe, and will give him food when he is old: if a daughter, he will sell her to a suitor, and will receive sufficient in return to make him a man of status in his tribe. He kills the sickly or crippled child, because it will cost him one more mouth to feed without affording him anything in return. . . .

"Such is the child of nature! Such the noble savage! Such the primitive condition of man, which philosophers, who had never studied it, have dared to hold up to our example!

"What is it, then, that they would have us imitate? Must we instruct our children in vice at the tenderest possible age, and sell them for marriage as soon as they arrive at puberty? Must we make our wives mothers when they are scarcely girls; treat them as slaves when they are women, and kill them when they are old? Must we place no restraint upon our passions; but abandon our youth to dissipation and debauchery, that we may have grey hairs on young heads, and all the foul diseases which spring from the diet and habits of a brute? For so does man in an uncivilised condition. The savage lives a life without a future or a past, without hope or regret, and dies the death of a coward and a dog, for whom the grave brings darkness, and nothing more."

The above extracts will give some little idea of the character of the

work. The two last chapters treat specially of the Negro: here the author has made copious use of recent anatomical and physiological researches on this subject. There is such a manifest desire to arrive at the truth, that we should desire not to be too critical on this part of the work, although we could have wished that the author had given his own opinions apart from debated scientific questions.

This volume is one rather of general interest than of scientific importance. It has, however, the somewhat rare merit of honestly describing what the author saw, and not what he would have liked to have seen. This coast journey is the first expedition undertaken by Mr. Reade, but we hope again to meet him on his travels, and on a future occasion to be favoured with more really scientific details concerning the races of man that may come under his observation.

ETHNOLOGY AND PHRENOLOGY AS AN AID TO THE BIOGRAPHER.

By J. W. JACKSON, Esq., F.A.S.L.

SHAKSPEARE.

It would seem from the established practice in all literary circles, that to write the life of a man, is a comparatively trifling affair, for which any person of scholarly education acquainted with the facts, is abundantly qualified. Perhaps, however, there is a mistake in this, and if so, the error is not the less grave, either from its antiquity or its prevalence. As true history is not a mere chronicle of events, so true biography is not a mere narration of incidents. The events and incidents are no doubt goodly material, with which a competent architect will rear a magnificent temple of symmetrical proportions and exquisite beauty; but what will a dunce do with them? In truth, biography is one of the fine arts, and demands genius of no common order for its successful achievement. Is it not, indeed, a species of soul-painting, a depicting of the inner man; a portraying of the subjective as projected upon the canvas of the objective. If not this, then is it only the fragment of a chronicle; and so, at best, but of co-ordinate rank and value. In very truth, every real biography is an evangel; a grand revelation of the *spiritual* beaming through the *actual*, of the eternal pervading the temporal, of the celestial becoming manifest in the earthly, and so demands for its successful effectuation,